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## Around the Americas

# Contras get increasing private

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WASHINGTON — An informal nationwide network of wealthy businessmen and soldiers of fortune, including the retired commander of U.S. forces in South Korea, has stepped up its aid to anti-Sandinista guerrillas in the past few months and may now be providing as much as \$1 million a month to the rebels, administration officials and congressional aides say.

Most of the aid is in the form of "humanitarian assistance," such as food, medicine and clothing, the officials and rebel spokesmen say.

But it also includes volunteer teams of military trainers and cash to buy weapons. A rebel spokesman said that one wealthy American businessman has donated money for anti-aircraft missiles and that another person had recently purchased a large cargo plane to ferry material to Central America.

The private aid, plus what some congressional sources say is increased aid from other countries, has been important in keeping the anti-Sandinista forces — known as contras — operating since Congress cut off U.S. support to the rebels in October.

But contra leaders say they still need U.S. assistance if they are to improve their military capabilities and counter new Sandinista weapons, such as the Mi-24 assault helicopters provided by the Soviet Union.

Adolfo Calero, political leader of the largest rebel group, the Nicaraguan Democratic Force, FDN, said in a recent interview that he will ask the administration to increase its aid request for the contras from the \$14 million Congress turned down last year to between \$30 million and \$50 million.

Congressional opponents of aid say they remain concerned that the Reagan administration is circumventing the will of Congress by encouraging, and perhaps helping, the rebels to raise money in

## aid

the United States. They are also concerned by allegations that the United States is promising to reimburse other countries for the aid they are providing the rebels, a charge the Reagan administration denies.

But the Justice Department has said there is nothing illegal about the contra fund-raising efforts.

Former contra spokesman Edgar Chamorro, who was dismissed by Calero in November because of policy conflicts, said in a telephone interview from his home in Miami that Calero's fund-raising trips to the United States are guided by the CIA.

"Somebody at the CIA tells him where to go, which door to knock on," Chamorro said. "When I worked for the FDN, Calero called the CIA four or five times a day."

### Adhering to law

But Calero said that the CIA, which is prohibited by law from advising the contras, is not involved in fund-raising efforts and that he seeks out donors on his own. A CIA spokeswoman, while declining to comment specifically about contra fund-raising, said the agency is adhering to the law.

Other sources indicate, however, that the United States is actively involved in finding ways to get the aid to the contras once it is collected.

Retired Gen. John Singlaub, a former U.S. commander in South Korea actively involved in providing aid to the contras, said high-ranking Pentagon officials are helping to coordinate relief efforts, including providing transportation of material to Central America aboard U.S. Navy and Air Force aircraft. Those officials include Nestor Sanchez, deputy assistant secretary of defense for inter-American affairs, Singlaub said.

Fred Ikle, the undersecretary of defense for policy, said one of his special assistants, Robert Wolthius, has been placed in charge of organizing an airlift for the contras. But Ikle said that so far no private contributions have been moved.

Singlaub, now president of the World Anti-Communist League, is one of the chief coordinators of private aid efforts.

In an interview, Singlaub said he and several other former military and intelligence officers, including members of a Pentagon advisory panel on Central America, collect about \$500,000 a month for the contras from wealthy Americans and conservative groups. The contributions are channeled through a group called U.S. Council for World Freedom.

politicians in Washington and some conservative religious and show business personalities.

Among its members are beer tycoon Joseph Coors, Dallas millionaire brothers Herbert and Nelson Bunker Hunt, singer Pat Boone, Moral Majority leader Jerry Falwell, Christian Broadcasting Network religious figure Pat Robertson, and Republican Sens. Jesse Helms and John East of North Carolina.

Two other council members, New Orleans physician Dr. Alton Ochsner and Louisiana state Rep. Louis "Woody" Jenkins, set up organizations that collect money and supplies for the contras and

for Nicaraguan refugees in Honduras.

"I'm all for the freedom fighters," Jenkins said in a telephone interview from New Orleans. "I want the Sandinistas kicked out of Nicaragua. That's one of the main motivations for my work."

### Helping refugees

Jenkins said, however, that the bulk of his aid effort goes to ease the lives of refugees living in camps in Honduras and not to help the contra war effort.

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Jenkins' group, Friends of the Americas, of Baton Rouge, La., periodically publishes a pamphlet titled Friends Report that contains appeals for contributions to a program entitled Shoebox for Liberty, because donations are shipped in shoe boxes.

The autumn 1984 edition of the Friends Report said types of aid needed included cash, a large airplane, new or used four-wheel-drive vehicles and pickup trucks, generators, boats and outboard motors, shortwave radios, walkie-talkies, battery-operated radios and a satellite dish.

Last weekend, Calero appealed for aid at a Miami radio station fund-raising effort for Friends of the Americas. FDN spokesman Bosco Matamoros said the "radio marathon" collected about \$100,-

000.

Other links in the private network of aid to the contras include Cuban and Nicaraguan exile businessmen in Miami, Houston, New Orleans and Los Angeles, as well as some Americans who once owned businesses in Nicaragua that were confiscated by the Sandinistas.

Perhaps the most active paramilitary group is the Civilian Military Assistance organization, which came to public attention last September when two of its members died during a contra attack on a Sandinista military base in Nicaragua.

## Stepped up recruitment

Since Congress suspended aid to the contras, the CMA has stepped up its recruitment, and last month said it had infiltrated about 10 men into Nicaragua to train contras in place of CIA advisers.

Calero said it was an unidentified CMA member who recently bought a cargo plane in the United States "at a bargain price" to transport private aid to the contras. Until the congressional cutoff, all rebel aircraft had been provided by the CIA.

Calero and CMA officials refused to say what type of aircraft had been purchased or from whom the plane was purchased.